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WESLEY "THE AGED."

August 4th, 1775, the English Conference commenced its session at Leeds. Since their previous meeting, Mr. Wesley had made the tour of Ireland, England, and Scotland; preaching generally every day, often twice, and sometimes three, and even four times in a day. He had performed a vast amount of pastoral work, in visiting from house to house, mingling in social meetings, and becoming acquainted with the numerical strength and spiritual state of the societies, by inquiring into everything connected with their prosperity, small as well as great. He had traveled more than five thousand miles, principally on horseback, had read many books, and written his reflections upon them, and upon almost everything else he saw or heard; and yet he returns to the annual gathering of the Conference, "not soiled and worn," but with a cheerful countenance, a firm and elastic step—unimpaired, either in mind or body, by the rush of years, or the weight of numerous duties, and unparalleled labors and responsibilities.

Nor did he shun his labor at the Conference. Being President, of course the chief direction and burden of Conference business fell on him, besides the unusual amount of public labor he performed on those occasions.

"Generally," says he, "during the time of Conference, as I was talking from morning till night, I had used to desire one of our brethren to preach in the morning. But having many things to say, I resolved, with God's help, to preach in the morning, as well as evenings. And I found no difference at all; I was no more tired than with my usual labor; that is, no more than if I had been sitting still in my study from morning to night."

He makes a similar remark respecting his labor at the next Conference: "I preached mornings as well as evenings; and it was all one. I found myself just as strong as if I had preached but once a day."

We have here, in the person and history of Mr. Wesley, a prominent and most extraordinary example of health, cheerfulness, diligence, and efficient usefulness, at a time of life when most men think themselves justified in retiring from all business, and especially from the responsibilities of public life. The great majority of Christian ministers do not seem to hold themselves competent to do effective service in the gospel field, after they have reached the age of sixty. And the people profiting younger and more vigorous men, are quite willing to have it so. But is this a true, or false judgment? Considered simply as a fact, it is undoubtedly true; but if we inquire whether it is necessarily true, our answer must be in the negative. A large class of men who begin to decline at forty-five and then drag out a miserable existence as ministers until sixty, when they voluntarily, or from necessity retire to spend the rest of their days in obscurity and inactivity, might, we are confident, if they would commence with the calculation to do so, and make their habits of eating, sleeping, and studying, tend to this end, extend their ministerial activity, acceptability, and usefulness, from ten to fifteen years beyond what they do, and die not in indolent inactivity, but with the harness on—at least, make the termination of life and labor more nearly coincident—

"Their body with their charge lay down,
And cease at once to work and live."

To a mind of delicate Christian sensibility—alive to the pleasures and proprieties of ministerial duty, and desiring nothing but to be more acceptable than the idea of spending ten to twenty years of the afternoon of life in a state of inactivity and inutility. And yet numbers of this class annually pass into this lower sphere of ministerial life, just at that age and period in their history when their experience and acquisitions should have fitted them to command the attention and respect of all classes—to exert an influence both extensive and safe—and when the church should feel that duty, interest, and pleasure require her to invite them to distinguished places of usefulness, and a higher place in her services.

Cases of premature infirmity and decay will occur under the action of special causes, but these are comparatively few; and for such, the church seldom fails to make due allowance, and exercise proper sympathy. But as to the great body of supernumeraries, it is quite clear, that their disagreeable and often mortifying relation to the field of ministerial life, is the result, not of necessity, founded in the nature of things, but of necessity arising from inexcusable neglect of delinquencies in respect to habits of life, the laws of health, and the improvement of the mind. There are three causes which operate these results, and these causes often combine their influence in forcing a minister from the field before he has accomplished his work.

First: Irregular physical habits, or inattention to the laws of health. When there is no regular system of diet—no adherence to rule as to the time of eating, or the kind and quantity of food taken—no uniform time of retiring or rising, by which just that quantity of sleep conducive to health is enjoyed—when all this is left without law, or controlled only by appetite, or the force of circumstances, disease will be most generated, the most perfect health, be impaired, and the strongest constitutions ultimately fail.

Second: Overacting, or attempting more within a given period than the constitution will endure, or more than can be uniformly performed in the same circumstances. Irregularity in one respect often leads to it in others. The life, instead of being a uniform course of diligence and duty, in which our strength of body and mind is judiciously employed in promoting the ends of human existence, becomes broken into fragments, portions of which are filled up with extravagant attempts to do what God never required, and what is beyond our natural capabilities; and other portions with the languor and inactivity of the invalid, that our exhausted energies may be recruited, and strength enough acquired to make other eccentric and spasmodic efforts. If the labor be intellectual, an effort is made to accomplish in a week, what might properly employ a month, and is followed by a prostration of energies which forbids intellectual labor of any kind, for many days or weeks succeeding.

A similar course of health is induced, when too much physical labor is undertaken, and when the minister preaches "too long or too loud," or in other respects disregards the rules of prudence and laws of health, in his pastoral work. The strongest constitution cannot long endure such direct contempt of the rules of physical and intellectual health and activity. There will be, there must be, premature inability to perform the ordinary work of the minister.

Third: The third cause of premature supernumeration, may be denominated under-working, or ministerial indolence; particularly mental, resulting in intellectual stupor and inactivity. The vigor of the mind depends much upon the exercise of its powers; and the effect of inactivity is scarcely less pernicious than that of unnatural excitement and over-action. There is a class of ministers who seem

to have finished their studies with their graduation to holy orders. That point gained, they have no occasion for application to books. The motive for study, if any exists, is too weak to rouse them from mental sluggishness. They soon use up the little capital with which they started: the same set of ideas serve them for all times and all occasions. Their acquaintance with language being limited, their phraseology is stereotyped. The same thoughts are repeated in the same words, so often that they become uninteresting, stale; and the hearer can anticipate the sentences before they are uttered. The effect upon the preacher is dullness; upon the people, listlessness. He has delivered the same things so often, in the very same words, that they are things to himself. Having failed to interest himself in his subject before appearing in the pulpit, he lacks inspiration. He has no spiritual zeal, or holy union, to raise him to the dignity of the gospel theme.

The result of all this, he fails to interest and profit the people. He complains of their inattention, and they complain of his incompetency. A dissatisfaction grows up between them, and they part in mutual disgust. He takes another charge at the ensuing Conference, but not having acquired sufficient industry and mental vigor to "study to show himself approved unto God, a workman that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth," he labors under the same embarrassments, and terminates his relation to the people under similar circumstances. Every such result increases his depression, and diminishes his prospect of future success. His standing becomes unavoidably known to the churches generally. The people here and there petition against him; and soon, the bishop and his cabinet find themselves obliged to place his name on the list of exceptions, that when they have more time, may consider what they can do with him; or, as a final resort, present him to the Conference as a candidate for suspension without his consent. If the latter course be adopted, the sympathy of the Conference places him on the supernumerary list. The plea of ill health cannot be urged, and hence the action of the Conference is based on that of mental inability. The plea is valid. The brother can do nothing but preach. He has neglected ministerial application so long, that he is an incorrigible sluggard in respect to everything requiring intellectual effort. He is about forty-five, possibly fifty years of age; and the church has the delightful prospect of supporting him as a supernumerary, from twenty to thirty years.

This is no fancy picture. There are scores of men on the list of supernumeraries, whose premature retirement from the ranks of the efficient, is wholly owing to one or more of the causes above named. If they were never called to preach, they should not have entered the ministry. If they were, they should have incurred a fearful responsibility on neglecting or outraging the laws of health, or undervaluing the gifts of the Spirit, as to render themselves incompetent to the work imposed on them by their high and holy commission.

The secret of Mr. Wesley's health, mental vigor, and unabated activity to extreme old age, must be looked for in his temperate and regular habits, and his mental industry. The first secured perfect health; the last kept his mind fresh and vigorous, and his faculties unimpaired to the end of his life.

It is true that he recognized the hand of Providence in fitting him for his work, and sustaining him in it, but he was too well acquainted with the laws of Providence to expect the end without using the means. This is clear, from the following entry in his journal—

"Tuesday, July 28th, 1774. This being my birthday, the first day of my seventy-second year, I was considering, How is this, that I find just the same strength as I did thirty years ago? That my sight is considerably better now, and my nerves firmer than they were then? I have none of the infirmities of old age, and have lost several I had in my youth! The grand cause is the good pleasure of God, who doth whatever pleases him. The chief means are, 1. My constant rising at four o'clock every day. 2. My general preaching at five in the morning; one of the most healthy exercises in the world. 3. My never traveling less than by sea and land, than four thousand five hundred miles in a year. Making similar reflections on the state of his health and strength, and giving us another reason for his 'evenness of temper.' 'I feel and grieve, may be, but by the grace of God, I feel at nothing.' D. H.

FOR ZION'S HERALD.

STUDIES.

Mr. Editor—I have clipped the following article, by Bishop Morris, from one of our Conference papers, and as it has not already appeared in the *Herald*, I hope you will give it an insertion, or favor us with an editorial notice of the subject. Many of our societies, in selecting a house for their preacher, practically ignore the idea of an office or study, and make their choice in view of the number of children they may be willing the preacher should present for quarterage; and no society, so far as my knowledge extends, is accustomed to make any allowance for library or educational expenses. But I have not the slightest wish to censure the people, for some preachers are quite willing to use their parlor as office, study, music room, receiving room, &c., and very few are willing to urge their stewards to provide a house of sufficient size to afford a whole and suitable room for their own private use.

The benefit of an office, furnished with the necessary conveniences for study, where a preacher can be alone, undisturbed by family calls or intrusions from without, would be inestimable. Such a convenience would add a large percentage to the amount of clear, consecutive study performed by most preachers.

Give the enterprising a word of commendation, Mr. Editor, and possibly our intelligent laymen may feel the necessity of providing more suitable means to assist us in our literary and theological pursuits. The enterprise is a good one, and one fairly before the people, will be popular. Yours &c., X. June 17, 1857.

PREACHERS' OFFICES.

No accommodation could be furnished at small expense is so much needed by Methodist ministers as offices. They are needed to hold their libraries as places of study, and for the transaction of business. The office should be furnished with all the necessary shelves for books, writing desks, and chairs. For the want of such fixtures our books are either in confused piles or scattered fragments. When a particular volume is needed, heaps of books must be overhauled, and in some instances, the search extended through several rooms to find it, if indeed, it be recovered at all, for many people depend on their neighbors for books, newspapers, and umbrellas, and are not careful to return them.

When a minister's study is only a room of his private dwelling, his family, of course, have access to it, and their sweeping and dusting, if done in his presence, suspend his business; or, still worse, if done in his absence, deluge everything. When he wants his paper, containing notes of reference or memoranda, it is not where he left it.

Now he is for a long search, the loss of hours of precious time, a sad defeat, a grievous trial of his patience, and, perhaps, a final conclusion that the important document has been condemned by the chambermaid as rubbish, and committed to the stove, though it cost him hours of research. If fortunate enough to avoid such trials, he will scarcely escape the teasing of his little children to come into his room and see the pictures, or the noise of the nursery; it is still less probable that he will be undisturbed by the necessary business of the family, such as passing through his room, the orders of the kitchen, the clutter of dishes, answering the door-bell, &c., all of which divert his attention, interrupt his studies, and throw him into confusion. Again, every one calling to see him on business, whether to engage his services at a funeral or wedding, or to lay some grievance before him, or obtain his advice on questions of religious duty, in order to see him, must disturb the family and suspend their business, however inconvenient it may be for them, so that the minister's family are as much annoyed as himself. Such an arrangement—or rather want of arrangement—is wholly unworkable. No respectable physician or attorney pretends to transact professional business without an office with his name upon it; and I cannot admit that our business is less important than their business, or that we have less need of offices than they have.

Every pastor should have an office conveniently located and properly designated, thus: "Preacher's office for church—station, or circuit," as the case may be. Here the church books and all the records of the church should be deposited for safe-keeping and reference. The office should not usually be located in the church edifice, where it might be used as a place of common resort for idle talkers, taking license from the notion that they all have rights in the church, and where the pastor might feel less free to relieve his office of such nuisance. If the latter course be adopted, the pastor's dwelling, but convenient to it, and, if practicable, on his premises, where his control would be as complete as that over his family residence, while one is entirely distinct from the other. In this office let him have a place for everything pertaining to it, and everything in its proper place. Let him here have his box-few filled, his shovel and tongs, his broom and duster, to be used only by himself or under his direction.

When he leaves the office for the night let him bolt the windows, lock the door, and carry the key with him, then when he returns every book and paper will be where he left it. One day with such an office, for business and study, would be two without it. When we had large circuits, carried our libraries in our saddle-bags, and enjoyed the solitude of shady forests, we could study without offices, and asked no accommodation of the kind; but now, bent upon cities, towns, and densely-populated regions, where we are expected to preach to the masses, and keep it more times a week, we need offices, and ought to have them. When any charge proposes to secure ground for a preacher's residence, one of the first inquiries should be, is there room for an office distinct from the dwelling? If not, is there ground adjoining that could be secured for office purposes? and, if neither, then could an office conveniently be located on the premises? The whole cost of building and furnishing an office, exclusive of the ground, need not exceed from three to five hundred dollars. Now, if the editors of our church periodicals, who publish this enterprise as I do, they will all publish this first notice of it, invite attention to it, also contribute to its success, and keep it in the mind of the people, take the matter in their hands, and provide the much needed accommodation. Then if they choose to procure permanent libraries for their respective charges, to be used by their successors, so much the better, and there will be places to put them. I am done.

T. A. MORRIS.

BROTHERHOOD IN THE GRAVE.

Christian cemeteries pronounce the brotherhood of mankind. Here the rich and the poor are laid to rest in the same earth. Here the noble and the lowly are united in the same dust. Here the learned and the ignorant are equal in the same silence. Here the living and the dead are united in the same hope. Here the living and the dead are united in the same love. Here the living and the dead are united in the same faith. Here the living and the dead are united in the same charity. Here the living and the dead are united in the same peace. Here the living and the dead are united in the same joy. Here the living and the dead are united in the same glory. Here the living and the dead are united in the same life. Here the living and the dead are united in the same love. Here the living and the dead are united in the same faith. Here the living and the dead are united in the same charity. Here the living and the dead are united in the same peace. Here the living and the dead are united in the same joy. Here the living and the dead are united in the same glory. Here the living and the dead are united in the same life.

Sometimes, too, in the monumental literature of those burial places, we meet with some grand assertion of the rights of man, which sounds like a prophet's admonition. At Concord, close by, there is a rude headstone, carved with a quaint inscription which has always rung, to my ear, with the magnificent tones of an Italianated tongue. Its condensed and pithy paradoxes are so admirable in themselves, and contain such wholesome arguments, that I repeat it to you entire—

"God wills us free; man wills us slaves. God's will be done! Here lies the body of John Jack, a native of Africa, who died in 1773, aged about 60 years. Though born in a land of slavery, he was born free; though he lived in a land of liberty, he lived a slave, till, by his honest though stolen labor, he acquired the source of slavery, which gave him his freedom; though not long before death, the grand tyrant gave him his final emancipation, and set him on a footing with kings. Though made a slave by Vice, he practised those virtues without which kings are but slaves."

And now, in the Christian democracy of the grave, bond and free meet together, as they shall yet again at the Judgment, before the Lord, who is the Maker of them all!—Prof. Huntington.

For Zion's Herald.

A HAPPY FAMILY!

Yes, a Happy Family! What a rare sight! But during my wanderings for our Tract Society, a few months since, I found one. In crossing fields from one road to another, with a satchel of books and tracts, I passed over a small hill, and at the foot of it appeared a very old, dilapidated house. At first I thought it uninhabited, but the smoke slightly coming from the old chimney said, somebody might be there. But who could be there, at least three-fourths of a mile from any other inhabitant, with no road out, and in such a poor old

house; but it seemed my business to see who was there, so drawing near, I knocked upon the door, whose weather-beaten panels were clattered in their sockets, and seemed ready to release themselves from their many years' confinement. After a moment's pause, I heard some one slowly moving towards the door. It opened, and there appeared an old lady, in very plain apparel, who bid me enter. I did so, and noticed she returned with a slow lifting movement aside. The cause of it she said, was that one side had been paralyzed with numb palsy. In the room sat her husband, in a large arm chair, with his back to the legs of it, who moved about the room by rolling his chair. He was over eighty years of age, and said, "he had not been five years from the house for five years." These two opposed the family! They were supported by the own, and preferred living in the house of their youth to falling entirely into the hands of others. I asked them if I felt the Lord was good to them? The woman burst into tears and replied with emphasis, "Yes I do, I do." I asked them if they would like some good news to read? They replied they could not before the advent of gunpowder, have been nearly impregnable. In former days it was accessible only by a drawbridge, which fell from a little gateway; but at present the interior is approached by a staircase of considerable altitude, as it is necessary to surmount the rock before reaching the castle. Altogether, the building is an interesting relic of feudal times; and adds a prominent and striking feature to the beautiful and romantic scenery by which it is surrounded.

Adjacent to the castle, and a little farther inland, stands the ruins of a small chapel, formerly used as a place of devotion by the garrison. On the south side of the chapel there is a projecting rock, in front of which I paused for a few moments, to contemplate the landscape beneath and around me. Immediately before me was the chapel, roofless and dilapidated, and voiceless as the dust which slept within its walls. As I turned to depart, I was startled by the sound of vocal music issuing from the chapel. I had carefully examined the building but a short time before, and had seen no one within it; neither had I observed any one approach it afterwards. Still it was quite possible that some lonely worshiper might, unperceived by me, have sought the altars of his forefathers, there to unite his remembrance of them with his adoration of the Most High. Curious, therefore, to see the person who had chosen that spot for his evening devotion, I drew near to the chapel on tip-toe and looked in; but there was no one to be seen; nothing was visible but the bare walls, and the long grass, and the tomb-stones of the dead. The music, however, continued to issue slowly and solemnly from the centre of the building. The language was the Gaelic, the voice apparently that of a young man about twenty years of age, and the theme one of the Psalms of David. I am not superstitious, but I felt a singular sensation creep over my frame, at such "hearing a voice, but seeing no man." "Can this be real," said I to myself, "or is my imagination deceiving me? Has some disembodied spirit returned to the scene of its former devotion, to renew the crimes of departed years, and sing a dirge to the shades of departed years?" I looked towards the setting sun; it shone brightly towards the horizon, and I was still three miles from Oban; but the idea of leaving the spot without solving the mystery, if it were capable of solution, was even more disagreeable than that of a midnight journey amidst the mountain solitudes of a strange land.

I had scarcely adopted the resolution of awaiting the event, when the music ceased, and there was silence for about two minutes; after which the voice again rose distinctly in the form of slow and solemn prayer to the Almighty. The words were Gaelic as before, but I knew of that language to be aware that the invisible worshiper was wrestling powerfully with his God. In the meantime the voice ceased altogether, silence sunk afresh upon the scene, and I seemed to feel more than ever alone. I again approached the chapel and looked in, but it was empty as before; and the stillness, which on my first arrival had pervaded that resting-place of the dead, now appeared to be doubly solemn. The voice at any rate was gone, and the invisible worshiper seemed to have departed, without leaving me the slightest clue to the mystery which had perplexed me.

I was about to quit the spot with my astonished mind unbalanced, and my curiosity wound up to the pitch, when I perceived a slender lad come from behind the rock, in front of which I had been standing, and, without observing me, bend his steps towards the Connel. "Can this be the invisible worshiper?" I said, half aloud; "and has the phenomenon which has puzzled me been merely the consequence of an echo?" I smiled involuntarily as this idea flashed across my mind; and calling aloud the young man, I requested him to stop. He did so, and approached me. He was dressed in the light blue coat and trousers of the West Highlands, and had a bonnet of some what darker shade upon his head. He had a staff in one hand, and supported with the other a large and heavy book, which was also suspended from his neck by a broad strap of black leather. It struck me as he drew near, that there was something very ingenious in his appearance. He bowed respectfully when I addressed him, and in reply to my inquiry if he had been praying, God and praying aloud behind that rock, he acknowledged, with a modest blush and in good English, that he had. Although the tone and language were different, the voice was the same as that which had proceeded from the chapel.

"Were you aware," said I, "that a remarkable echo exists in this place?"

"An echo, sir," replied the youth; "I do not know what it means."

I explained to him, in as few words as possible, the philosophy of sound, and the nature of an echo; and then inquired if he were really ignorant that such a thing existed there?

"And how did you happen," said I, "to come here this evening?"

"As to that, sir," replied he, "I have no objection to own it. In the house where I slept last night, there was no opportunity for prayer and praise, and, as I was to pass this night at Connel, I thought I might be again interrupted. So I turned out of the road to seek a quiet nook, where, unseen and unheard, as I thought, except by God himself, I might sing his praises and seek his face in prayer."

"And do you always use the Gaelic language in your devotions?"

"In general I do, sir. It is the language of my country and of my father's house; and when my piety is the warmest, it always finds rest in Gaelic."

There was so much good sense, as well as devotional feeling, in the young man's answers, that I felt desirous of knowing something more about him. Anxious, however, in the first place, to make another trial of the echo, I requested him to retire once more behind the rock, and to reply aloud to the questions I should put. He complied

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THE YOUNG PEDDLER OF CORRIVOUL-LIN.

This ancient fortress, once the residence of Scotland's kings, stands on a rocky promontory at the entrance of Loch Eive. The building is of a square form, the sides of a commanding height, although the masonry be rude; and the rock having been hewn away on a line with the walls, presents a precipitous face, the ascent made before the advent of gunpowder, have been nearly impregnable. In former days it was accessible only by a drawbridge, which fell from a little gateway; but at present the interior is approached by a staircase of considerable altitude, as it is necessary to surmount the rock before reaching the castle. Altogether, the building is an interesting relic of feudal times; and adds a prominent and striking feature to the beautiful and romantic scenery by which it is surrounded.

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Advertisements.

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